



**TOWN OF MANSFIELD
COMMITTEE ON COMMUNITY QUALITY OF LIFE
Monday, November 8, 2004
Audrey P. Beck Municipal Building
Conference Room C**

Minutes

Present: A. Whitham Blair, B. Clouette (Chair), A. Hawkins, H. Koehn, E. Paterson, C. Schaefer

Staff: M. Berliner, M. Hart

Visitors: R. Cook

1. Call to Order/Roll Call

Mr. Clouette called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

2. Opportunity for Public to Address the Committee

Mr. Cook reviewed his comments to the proposed goals and strategies. Bob's comments are very comprehensive, and address almost every item (see attached for more detail).

Mr. Clouette thanked Mr. Cook for his comments. He explained that the charge to the committee is broader than spring weekend and disruptive behavior. Consequently, the members are also looking at quality of life issues such as the quality of rental housing in town.

3. October 11, 2004 and October 25, 2004 Meeting Minutes

Mr. Hawkins made a motion, seconded by Ms. Whitham-Blair, to approve both sets of minutes. The motion passed unanimously.

4. Next Steps

Mr. Hawkins stated that he greatly appreciates Mr. Cook's comments. However, he is concerned about the suggestion to hire part-time citations officers to enforce a loitering ordinance, as he thinks that police are required to deal with unruly crowds and groups.

Mr. Clouette explained that some of what needs to be done is to encourage the university to implement certain practices, but we have limited control over the university. We have to determine what is workable and enforceable. This is a complex issue, and we need to focus on what the town can reasonably accomplish.

Mayor Paterson said that we need to be cognizant of that fact that the university has taken some steps these past few years. For example, the university has amended the jurisdiction of the student code of conduct to include off-campus behavior, and this has been a huge plus. Also, President Austin did empanel a task force on substance abuse, and we now have a community-campus partnership in place to implement the task force recommendations.

Mr. Clouette commented that the Mayor deserves credit for establishing the new community-campus partnership. In addition, the lag between student infractions of the code and university sanctions is less than it was in past – we have seen improvement here.

Mr. Clouette asked about the previous meeting, which he had been unable to attend. Mr. Hawkins explained that the committee had spent the majority of that meeting reviewing law enforcement issues with SGT Cox, Resident Trooper Supervisor. Our police have implemented a number of new strategies that appear to be making an impact. The media efforts, in particular, have been key.

Ms. Koehn asked if the new trespass policy implemented by Carriage House was having an impact? Mr. Berliner said that the anecdotal evidence from the police is positive.

Ms. Koehn said that it would be interesting to know if the legislature's committee on hospital and health care had emergency room data related to spring weekend and student parties. Mr. Clouette and the Mayor stated that we had this information.

Ms. Koehn asked as to how many times during this past spring weekend that regional ambulances were forced to go on diversion. Mr. Clouette and Mr. Hawkins commented that the number of occurrences was certainly sufficient to place a strain on existing

resources. Ms. Whitham-Blair added that the hospital most impacted by spring weekend is our local facility, Windham Hospital.

Mr. Clouette stated that, with regard to next steps, he would like staff to prepare a draft report for review by the committee. After its review, the committee would then present the report to the Town Council. He would like to add a goal stating that it is important for university students to enjoy their time in Mansfield, as they are also residents and part of the town.

Mr. Hawkins encouraged staff consider Mr. Cook's comments as they prepare the report.

Mr. Clouette requested that staff explain strategy number 8 (amending zoning regulations to promote density) in more detail, and added that all recommendations would need to be reviewed for legality.

Mr. Berliner stated that it is important for staff to receive input from committee members, as this will be the committee's report.

Mr. Clouette explained that once the committee has presented its report to the Council, he would like to hold at least two public hearings to solicit comment from the public. Furthermore, one of those two hearings should be held on campus, to receive input from the students.

5. Next Meeting

The committee tentatively planned to meet again on December 13, 2004.

6. Adjournment

The committee adjourned at 7:28 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Matthew Hart
Assistant Town Manager

Appendix

DRAFT

TOWN OF MANSFIELD

COMMITTEE ON COMMUNITY QUALITY OF LIFE

Committee created to examine the issues relating to UConn Spring Weekend Proposed Goals and Strategies

Revised 11/7/2004 - Robert C. Cook

Goals

1. Promote and maintain a healthy environment for students and the community as a whole.
2. ~~Eliminate/Reduce/-and~~ control ~~potential for~~ violence and damage to persons and property at off-campus student housing and adjoining neighborhoods and apartment complexes.
3. Reduce and control nuisances such as noise, littering and vandalism associated with large parties and related activities.
4. Encourage and promote positive relations between students living off-campus and their neighbors.
5. Reduce and control substance abuse by young persons in the community.
6. Protect safety of tenants
- 6a. ~~and improve~~ Improve and maintain quality of rental housing in town.
7. Manage the development of rental housing in the community.
8. Maintain property values in areas of town populated with rental housing.
9. Reduce and control impact upon municipal, state and university public safety resources.
10. Establish and maintain regular relations between town, state and university staff and public safety agencies to address issues relating to off-campus housing and other student activities.
11. Eliminate and/or control Violence, rowdiness, bottle throwing, fighting, vandalism and general upheaval that is connected with Spring Weekend.

Town of Mansfield Strategies

1. Increase and maintain law enforcement presence in affected areas of town, to enforce criminal code, town ordinances and maintain public order.

- *Responsible party* - town, state and university law enforcement agencies
- *Time frame* - immediate and ongoing
- *Financial impact* - all parties to experience increased costs for overtime. Attempt to defray cost by asking property owners to hire officers on private duty.

o Reduce overtime costs by having Resident Troopers and Mansfield police work split shifts on weekends have regular coverage hours extend to 2:20AM

o Recover costs by charging responsible parties for "call back cost"

o Reduce costs and increase coverage by using citation officers to enforce litter and loitering regulations

• *Issues/comments* - since August 2004, law enforcement activity has increased significantly with some apparent positive impact and results. Shorten response times by negotiating mutual assistance pacts with University Police. Obtain permission to enforce trespass, loitering, and littering ordinances from all property owners on Hunting Lodge and North Eagleville Roads

• Direct impact on goals 2,3,5,6,9,11 – moderate to high depending on level of enforcement

• Direct impact on goals 6a,7 – none

• Direct impact on goals 1,4,10 – none

• Direct impact on goal 8 - none

2. Increase and maintain enforcement of zoning regulations, to ensure proper levels of unit occupancy and to improve and maintain physical condition of rental properties.

- *Responsible party*- Planning and Zoning office, town and state police
- *Timeframe* - immediate and ongoing
- *Financial impact* - could experience increased costs for overtime. Attempt to modify work schedules to accommodate within regular hours.
- *Issues/comments* - increased activity over the past year with some apparent positive impact and results. Planning and Zoning has limited number of staff, may need police to assist. May need to hire additional staff such as part-time citations officers. [Persuade prosecutor that continued over night parking at a residence is proof of residence](#)
- [Direct impact on goals 2,3,5,6,9,11 – none](#)
- [Direct impact on goals 6a,7,8 – slight](#)
- [Direct impact on goals 1,4,10– none](#)

3. Develop and implement housing code for rental properties to protect safety of tenants and to improve and maintain quality of rental housing in the community. strongly consider adding provisions for sprinklers and blight.

- *Responsible party* - town manager's office, building department, town attorney, town council (approval authority)
- *Time frame* - 6months to draft ordinance, and to hire housing inspector
- *Financial impact*- \$50,000 -\$65,000 for housing inspector salary and fringe (does not include vehicle and equipment) and legal fees. Defray cost through inspection and licensing fees.
- *Issues/comments* - current staffing level insufficient to assume this major responsibility; would need to hire a full-time housing inspector. Property owners may object to code and related fees, as well as costs to install sprinklers. [Will have a direct result of reducing the number of low and moderate income rental units available. Quite likely to be expanded to include single family dwellings. This is a significant additional intrusion into the lives of town residents.](#)
- [Direct impact on goals 1,2,3,4,5,9,10,11 – none](#)
- [Direct impact on goal 6,6a,7,8 - slight](#)

4. Develop and implement rental registry and licensing procedure for rental properties to track development and number of rental units in town, to monitor compliance with housing code, and to raise revenue for code enforcement activities and programming.

- *Responsible party* - building department, town manager's office, town attorney, town council (approval authority)
- *Timeframe* - 6 months following hire of housing inspector

- *Financial impact*- housing inspector salary and fringe, and legal fees. Defray cost through license fees.

• Issues/comments - proposal assumes housing inspector will have time and ability to develop and implement program. Property owners may object to licensing fee. Will result in a decrease in the number of low and moderate income units available. What constitute a rental unit? Is a room in a house a rental unit? Is a housemate that contributes to monthly expenses a renter? If a house is rented for the summer months is the property subject to these regulations? If a family goes away for a year and rents their home is it subject to these regulations? If there is no housing code there is no need for the registry.

- Direct impact on goals 1,2,3,4,5,7,9,10,11 – none
- Direct impact on goal 6,6a,8 - slight

5. Develop and implement property maintenance and litter ordinance for rental properties to protect public health, to improve and maintain physical appearance of properties, and to maintain property values in neighborhoods.

- Responsible party - recycling and refuse coordinator, town managers office, town attorney, town council (approval authority)
- Time frame - 3 to 6 months to draft and begin to implement
- Financial impact - legal fees and staffing expenditures (if necessary)

Issues/comments - recycling agent has limited time to enforce, would probably need part-time assistance. Could hire part-time citations officers for both zoning and property maintenance. Can property maintenance ordinances that discriminate between rental properties and owner occupied properties be enforced? State litter ordinances are sufficient. Permission to enforce litter ordinances on private property should be obtained from owners of rental properties.

- Direct impact on goals 1,2,3,4,5,6,6a,9,10,11 – none
- Direct impact on goal 8 - slight

6. Produce and distribute a model lease and fact sheet for landlords and tenants to promote positive relations, and to protect rights of both parties.

- Responsible party- building department, town manager's office, planning and zoning office, town attorney
- Time frame - 3 months following hire of housing inspector 2 weeks after requirements of model lease are presented to town attorney
- Financial impact - covered under housing inspector salary and fringe.
- Legal fees and publication costs. Defray expenses through licensing fees
- Issues/comments ~~proposal assumes housing inspector will have time and ability to develop and implement program~~ Council defines requirements of model lease. Limit the number of people at a party to 1 per 20 square feet of living

space. Keg beer not allowed. Outdoor parties subject to same restrictions as indoor parties. Outdoor parties in multi unit situations required to have boundary markers. Tenant assumes responsibility for all actions of guests. Parties requiring call back will be charged the cost of the callback. Define noise levels that may not be exceeded, during party, after 11:00 PM. Town has the right to enforce trespass, loitering, and littering ordinances on private property.

- Direct impact on goals 2,3,5,6,6a,8,9,11 – slight to moderate depending on contents of model lease and level of enforcement
- Direct impact on goal 1,4,7,10 – none

7. Research and consider adopting other nuisance abatement ordinances and regulations, to assist with law enforcement activities, to protect public health, to improve and maintain physical appearance of properties, and to maintain property values in neighborhoods.

- Responsible party- town manager's office, planning and zoning office, building department, town attorney and other town staff, town council (as approval authority)
- Time frame - ongoing
- Financial impact - legal fees and potential staff costs
- Issues/comments - staffing levels might need to be increased to develop and implement recommendations

Impact of research on issues cannot be judged

8. Examine feasibility of amending zoning regulations to revise definition of "family" and to promote density for multi-family housing in certain areas of town. Consider a special overlay zone.

- Responsible party - planning and zoning office, town manager's office, town attorney, planning and zoning commission (approval authority)
- Time frame - long-term project
- Financial impact - legal and engineering fees
- Issues/comments - extension of UConn water and sewer would enhance density and development. Focus now is on Storrs Center project. Current zoning regulations provide for student housing.

Impact of feasibility study cannot be judged.

-
- 9. Create loitering ordinance that prohibits loitering within 500 ft of any area in town that has had three or more police calls within the last 12 months and any area that has been the site of a major disruption in the past 5 years. Provide for \$25 fine for the first offense in a 24 hour period, \$50 for the second in 24 hour period, \$100 and arrest for third offense in a 24 hour period. A person is loitering when they are not a resident and not a guest and not passing through an area.
 - Responsible party - town attorney, Town Council (approval authority)
 - Time frame –the length of time it takes the Town Attorney to draw up the ordinance
 - Financial impact - legal fees, training, communication equipment
 - Issues/comments –bulk of enforcement can be done with citation officers.
 - o Direct impact on goals 2,3,5,6,9,11 – moderate
 - o Direct impact on goal 7 – none
 - o Direct impact on goals 1,4,10 – none
 - o Direct impact on goal 6a,8 - slight

Joint Town of Mansfield/University of Connecticut Strategies

1. Develop and maintain regular contacts between town, state and university staff and public safety agencies to work cooperatively to address issues relating to off-campus housing and other student activities. Emphasize that the jurisdiction of student code of conduct includes off-campus activities.
 - *Responsible party* - town manager's office, dean of students office, planning and zoning, residential life, town and state police
 - *Time frame* - immediate and ongoing
 - *Financial impact* - negligible
 - *Issues/comments* - personnel from town and state police, and university dean of students' office have formed communications team to dialogue with students residing at Carriage House. Staff believes student residents were engaged and benefited from the discussions.
 - Direct impact on goals 2,3,5,9,11 – slight(impact is limited to the impact of the code of conduct applying to off-campus activities)
 - Direct impact on goal 6,6a,7,8 – none
 - Direct impact on goals 1,4 - slight
 - Direct impact on goal 10 – completely accomplished
2. Establish a subcommittee of town/university relations committee to develop, coordinate and implement any number of programs to promote positive relations between students residing off-campus and the community, and to educate students

about the importance being "good neighbors." Example programs would include neighborhood clean-up days, community service projects, student safety and off-campus housing fairs, [pancake breakfasts, trips to the mall](#), and community welcome events. Could hire a community liaison coordinator (CLC) who reports to the town manager and an appropriate university department head to serve as lead staff person. Position could be funded jointly by the town and university.

- *Responsible party* - town/university relations committee, town managers office, parks and recreation department, recycling agent, dean of students' office, residential life, student activities, town and university public safety entities
- *Time frame* -3 to 6 months to develop and implement initial programming. Could take longer if partners decide to hire CLC position to take lead.
- *Financial impact* - \$50,000 - \$60,000 for CLC salary and fringe. Would need modest operating budget (\$3,000) for programs. Partners to share costs; licensing fee could help defray costs.
- *Issues/comments* - would be difficult for existing staff to assume lead programming role. If possible, hire CLC to take lead. If cannot hire CLC, create a team of existing personnel to develop programming on more modest level. [Looks like a whole lot of effort to attempt to instill in some young people values they should have before they enter high school.](#)

- o [Direct impact on goals 2,3,5,6,6a,7,8,9,10,11 – none](#)
- o [Direct impact on goals 1,4 – significant if programs work](#)

3. Help establish and support efforts of town/university substance abuse task force to reduce and control substance abuse by young persons in the community.

- *Responsible party* - substance abuse task force, town manager's office, dean of students' office, town/university relations committee
- *Timeframe* - 3 to 6 months to develop and implement initial programming. [10 to 20 years to change cultural attitudes](#)
- *Financial impact* - could need modest operating budget (\$3,000-\$5,000) for programs
- *Issues/comments* - town and university in process of establishing task force. [Substance abuse is a systemic national problem. A sustained effort towards changing the culture of binge drinking is to be supported.](#)

- o [Direct impact on goals 1,2,3,4,6,7,9,11 – slight](#)
- o [Direct impact on goal 5 – potential for significant impact when coupled with a national campaign to change societal norms](#)
- o [Direct impact on goal 6,6a,7,8 - none](#)

4 ~~Combined with municipal licensing program, develop~~ Develop and implement off-campus housing certification program to promote quality housing, to assist students with locating quality housing, and to help landlords market rental properties to students.

- *Responsible party* - ~~community liaison coordinator, residential life, building department, town manager's office~~ University of Connecticut
- *Time frame* - ~~6-12 months following hire of CLC~~ unknown
- *Financial impact* - ~~CLC salary and frnge, some marketing and productions expenses. Defray cost through license fees.~~ no financial impact of the Town of Mansfield
- *Issues/comments* - could be win/win program for both landlords and tenants. The University is the only institution that can control where its students reside. The University is the only institution that is not hampered by town boundaries, policies developed by the University would be applicable regardless of the town in which the property is found. The University is the only institution that can control the demand placed on low to moderate income housing in this area.

- Direct impact on goals 1,2,3,5,6,9,10,11 – slight
- Direct impact on goal 4,7,8 – none

5. Examine feasibility of extending Uconn water and sewer service areas to promote density and off-campus housing in certain areas of town.

- Responsible party- university administration, planning and zoning office, department of public works, town manager's office
- Time frame - long-term project
- Financial impact - engineering, planning and construction costs could be considerable
- Issues/comments - extension of Uconn water and sewer would enhance density and development of quality housing

This is much the same as proposed in 8 in the previous section

6. Provide the University with lists of addresses of residences suspected to have more than 4 unrelated persons and receive names of University students claiming those addresses as residences.

- o Responsible party- university administration, planning and zoning office.
- o Time frame - immediate
- o Financial impact –clerical staff in zoning
- o Issues/comments –Possible violation of privacy, state legislation could mandate reporting.
- o Direct impact on goals 1,2,3,5,6,9,10,11 – slight

| o Direct impact on goal 4,7,8 – none

| *Modified by R. Cook 11/8/04*

Prepared by: M. Berliner and M. Hart